

For anyone with the least curiosity about the world's tides this well written and researched book is a must read.

The author, a surfer and skipper of a 46' sloop on the Pacific Northwest Coast, begins his book with a falling tide bringing near disaster to his sloop. Narrowly averted with a good crew, hard work, and a flood tide.

Traveling the world to witness the largest and most unusual tides he digs deep into the mythology, science, history and culture of the world's tides and

the people who live with them. From the straights of Magellan at the tip of South America where the Pacific and Atlantic meet, to the 25 foot high tidal bore that roars up China's Qiantang River, often with fatal results, with a foray under arctic ice at low tide to forage for clams and mussels with a native Inuit.

He deftly describes many of the factors or constituents that affect any given tide and those constituents that affect all tides. The apogee and perigee of the moon and sun, familiar words from middle school earth science, describes the celestial dance between earth, moon and sun in their orbits. Other constituents to name a few include sea floor topography, shoreline geography and weather.

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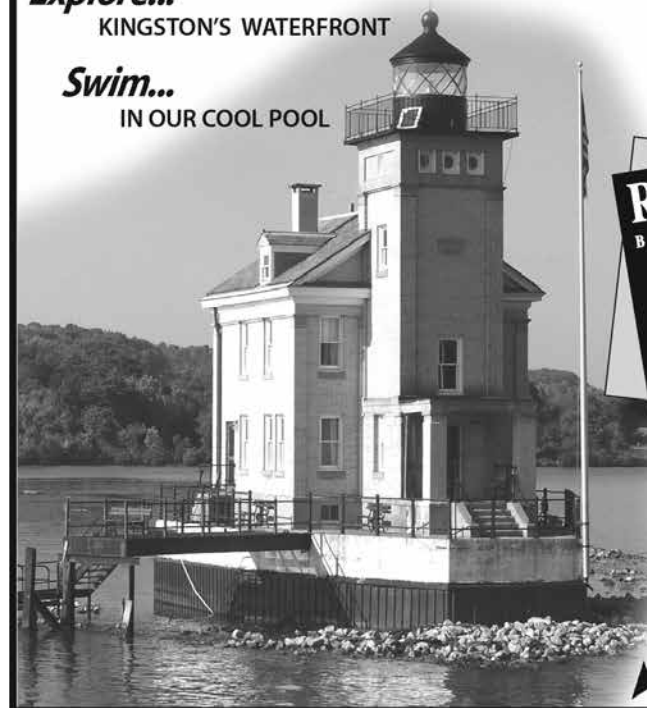
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The chapter on how harmonic convergence and resonance affect tides differently in different locations left me out of my depth, but convinced me that there is more to the tides than meets the eye, or the ear.

What makes the books so enjoyable is "Whites" keen eye for details. Plucking mud shrimp at low tide from Canada's Bay of Fundy, (an important source for migrating sand pipers), to the sights, sounds, and smells of an indigenous community on Panamas east coast.

He also strikes an easy rapport with an engineer overseeing the building of floodgates, protecting Venice, Italy, to the monks of Mount Saint Michael in France who are surrounded by the sea half the day and muddy land the other half.

He delves into human's attempt to understand the tides through the ages, although the moons influence was well known, the rest was speculation and myth. One of the most imaginative myth's is that of the Tlingit people of Canada and Alaska where it was told..A raven, the great sprit, and an old woman who lives in a cave strikes a deal to allow the Tlingit to harvests the bounty of ebb tide.

Western understanding of tides came in fits and starts

with Pliny Natural History, one of the first written, (and mostly wrong) explanation of tides. With the beginning of modern science from Copernicus to Galileo and finally Isaac Newton developing his laws of physics. Motion and gravity playing it mysterious but quantifiable role.

What sort of role the tide will play providing renewable energy for the world is still being decided. Currently contributing just two percent of the world's electrical output. Serious environmental and engineering problem's needed to be overcome for its immense potential to be realized.

Through his book, Jonathan White infuses the reader with his awe at the interconnectedness of the tide with the solar system, humans and what he calls the "Sprit of the Ocean". For any reader of this magazines Sea Tow tide charts they would be wise to read the disclaimer in its masthead stating, "please be aware these charts should not be considered the last word on tide conditions at any given moment of point or time."

After reading Jonathan whites "tides you'll know why!"